

CENTRAL REGION CONFERENCE

Maryland's Commitment to Veterans

March 22, 2019



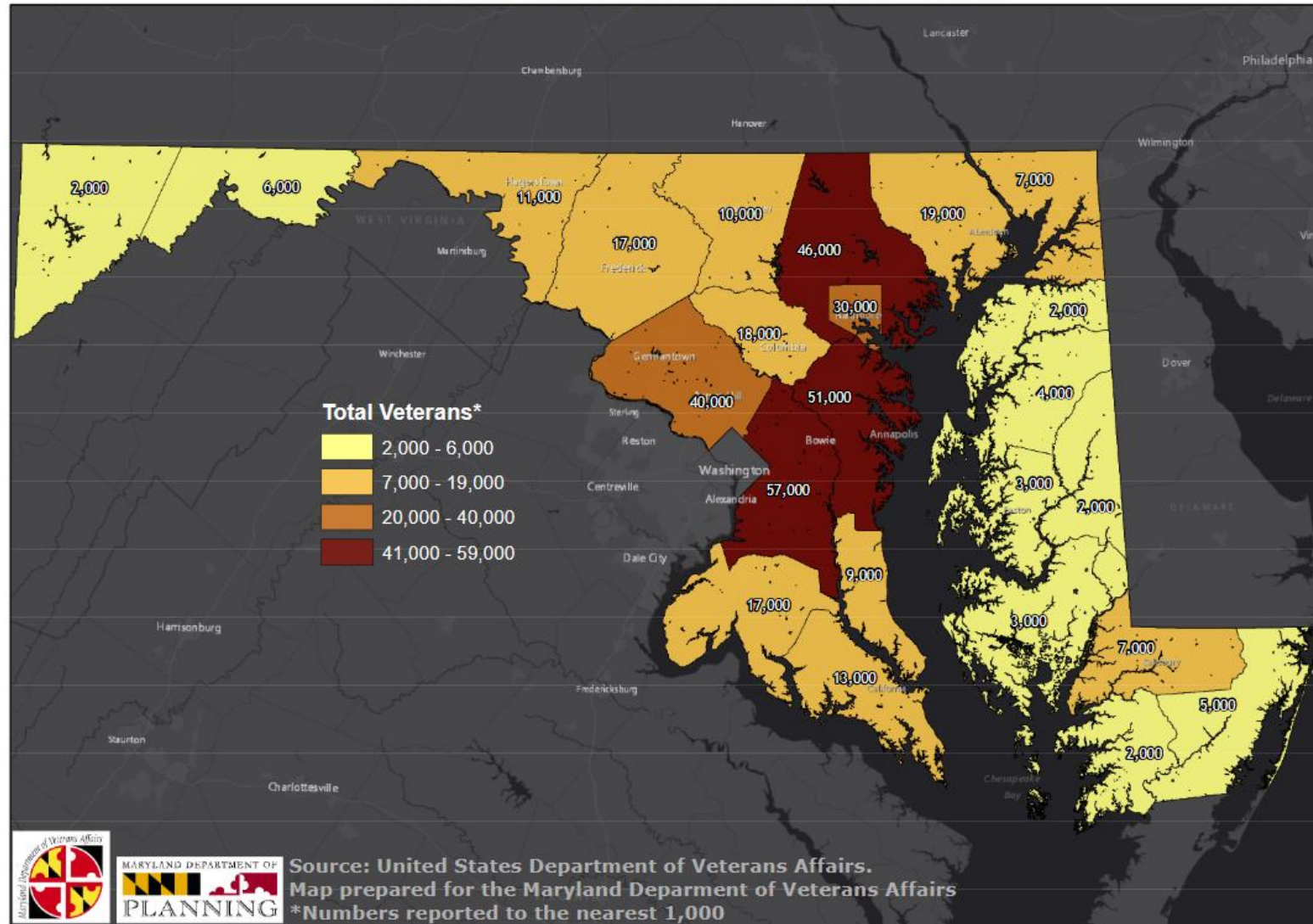
MARYLAND
Department of Health
Maryland's Commitment to Veterans

Maryland's Commitment to Veterans (MCV) at a Glance

- A collaboration between Maryland's Department of Health; United States Department of Veterans Affairs; Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs; Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Maryland Higher Education Commission
- Assist veterans and their families with coordinating behavioral health services for the veteran, including mental health and substance abuse services- either with the VA or Maryland's public health system
- Provide information and referrals related to employment, education, housing, VA benefits
- Outreach: educate residents, veterans (i.e. Maryland National Guard) and community groups about MCV

Projected Number of Veterans in Maryland by County:2018

*Total Projected Veterans in Maryland: 380,000



Service & Process

- We offer referral assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Referrals are available for an unlimited number of resources
- Veterans and families can connect via telerep support, email or phone
- One Regional Resource Coordinator per region – Central, Southern, Western, Eastern
- A personal relationship is built

Once a veteran is linked to an RRC, they will always speak to the same person. Once a relationship is built, the veteran will ideally feel heard and understood, opening up the lines of communication so needs can be met, and stability can be achieved.

Behavioral Health Coordination

- Mental health and substance abuse counseling services are properly screened for the veterans desired provider
- If immediate services are not available through U.S. Veteran Affairs, or if in the case a veteran prefers an alternative provider then they will be connected to additional services in the community through state and local behavioral health systems as well as not for profits
- Veterans are designated as special population under Public Mental Health System, which means they do not need to meet typical eligibility requirements such as income to qualify for uninsured services through Beacon Health

Staff Contact Information

Resource Coordinators

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For More Information.....

Visit our website:

www.veterans.health.maryland.gov

Or call our hotline:

1-877-770-4801



Military Culture

Military Cultural Differences

Army: “HOOAH”

Marines: “OORAH”

Air Force: “HOOYA”

Navy: “HOORAH”



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Chain of Command

Enlisted Ranks:

- Enter Service directly after Boot camp
- Enlisted Rank are E-1,2,3 & Private, Private 1st class, Lance Corporal and Specialists are some of the titles included in this class

Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO's):

- These ranks are still considered enlisted
- E-4 through E-9
- These tend to be leadership ranks or highly trained specialists

Chain of Command Continued

Commissioned Officers:

- Are commissioned by the President of the United States
- College educated went inducted into service
- Ranks are O-1 through O-11
- These are mostly leadership positions or highly trained specialists i.e.; Pilots, Boat Captains, Nuclear Engineers etc.

Rank

- **E1-E9:** could represent 20 years of service
- **E-1 through E-3:** are often learning/training ranks
- **E4-E6:** often have leadership responsibilities at the squad and team level
- **E7-E9:** are unit/platoon/company leaders
- Rank is typically acquired through taking exams, time in rank, good performance and achievements lead to advancement

Rank & Responsibility

- By the end of the first tour, many enlisted Service members have already been promoted to the ranks of noncommissioned officer (E4 or above)
- Assuming additional responsibilities as the leader of a small unit, such as a squad, flight, or section, offers Service members both greater challenges and greater rewards.
- It also makes them more directly responsible for the lives and safety of other members of their unit.

Military Separation & Transitioning Challenges

Service member transition issues:

Some find transitioning to full-time civilian life challenging.

Such challenges include:

- Lack of regimented routines
- Lack of order and command
- Service members may feel let down or even betrayed by those they once trusted, or feel abandoned by those who once cared about their welfare (this betrayal can be extended to VA)
- Service members may feel they let their comrades down. These feelings may complicate separation from service and subsequent adjustment to civilian life
- Maintaining contact with military organizations and former peers may help



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Military Separation & Transitioning Challenges Continued

- **Skill set translation issues:**

Additionally, because service members often train to an amazing level of proficiency in their field, with a great deal of responsibility, it can be especially hard to transition to civilian employment at times.

The Nature of Separation

- The process of grieving the loss of military attachments can be made much more difficult if those attachments were highly conflicted at the time of the Service members separation from the military
- This may be the case for Service members who feel let down or even betrayed by those they once trusted, or feel abandoned by those who once cared about their welfare
- Similarly, Service members may harbor concerns about having let their buddies down. These feelings may complicate separation from service and subsequent adjustment to civilian life

Additional Challenges In Adjusting

- Service members who have deployed out of country may have been witnesses to deep poverty, lawlessness, severe neglect etc.
- Returning to society can be jarring and difficult to accept
- Service members may perceive a lack of awareness and appreciation from civilians



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A Little Bit About Veteran Culture

- Veterans stick together and tend to help one another
- Not all Veterans have been involved in combat
- Not all have gone overseas
- Veterans identify by their past military occupations
- Most Veterans like to talk about their time in the military
- Most Veterans are proud that they served
- Many Service members maintain communications for years or decades with former unit members by e-mail, phone, or physical presence at reunions
- For some Veterans, their commanding officer or small unit leader will always be someone they respect and may turn to in times of need

Myths and Misconceptions

Leading to Stigmatizing Interactions



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VETERANS ARE DANGEROUS?

- As I watch my two young children develop, I worry about how media coverage of combat veterans and PTSD will affect them as they grow up, what their friends may assume about their father. In previous eras perhaps he would have been lauded as a hero, but today's headlines seem just as likely to characterize him as a "ticking bomb." –Veteran participant
- Several news stories describe recent Veterans as "ticking time bombs" or as "dangerous" on account of post-traumatic stress. It's a narrative that has persisted for decades
- Some Veterans internalize this stigma: "dysfunctional vet"
- But.....



VETERANS ARE DANGEROUS?

- Individuals with PTSD are not dangerous as a result of this diagnosis alone
- PTSD in combination with other factors such as substance use conditions and younger age confers some risk for violence but the majority of individuals with PTSD do not commit violent acts

Stigma & Beliefs

- Veteran thinks people assume I was in combat
- Veteran believes that others think military service is in no way as valuable as a college degree
- If you weren't there, how can you possibly understand
- People think I have PTSD or that I am crazy just because I was in the military
- If I seek care, people will think I am broken
- People think I am stupid for going in the military in the first place
- Intensity does not equate Anger
- Moral Injury

Effectively Engaging Veterans

Military Ethos

Strength	Guiding Ideal	Vulnerability
Placing the welfare of others above one's own welfare	Selflessness	Not seeking help for health problems because attending to personal health is not a priority
Commitment to accomplishing missions and protecting comrades in arms	Loyalty	Survivor guilt and complicated bereavement after losing friends
Toughness and ability to endure hardships without complaint	Stoicism	Not acknowledging significant symptoms and suffering after returning home
Following an internal moral compass to choose "right" over "wrong"	Moral Code	Feeling frustrated and betrayed when others fail to follow a moral code
Becoming the best and most effective professional possible	Excellence	Feeling ashamed of (or not acknowledging) imperfections



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Veteran Engagement Questions

What was compelling about being a(n) _____ (Soldier, Marine, Airman, Sailor)?

How is your job the same as or different from your job when you were deployed?

People serve in different roles at different times in their careers that may make them feel more or less connected to the military. I'm wondering about your experience with this....

What for you have been some of the most important aspects of being in the military?

Veteran Questions Continued

What branch of Service are/were you in?

Why did you join that branch?

How would you like to be addressed?

What kinds of missions have you participated in?

Are/were you an officer, warrant officer, or enlisted?

What is/was your rank?

What is/was your job? What do/did you do? (i.e., one's job may have nothing to do with the person's MOS in some cases).

What training have you received?

Where have you been stationed?

Deeper Engagement

What was the cause of your leaving the military?

What was the hardest part about leaving?

What was the best part?

How long have you been a Veteran?

What challenges have you had to face as a
Veteran?



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Be Mindful Thanking or Praising Veteran

- Veterans sometimes feel that the individual or group that is thanking is not fully informed as to what service meant
- Veterans report feeling “put on the spot” and embarrassed
- Service might have left the Veteran feeling confused and conflicted
- All of this can lead to isolation and a feeling of not belonging or being misunderstood
- What I have learned is: Actions mean more than words (pay a tab, give up your seat, etc.)
- Lastly, a lot of Veterans appreciate being thanked



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Be Mindful Thanking or Praising a Veteran Continued

- Best not to say you were only following orders, you didn't know any better or it wasn't your responsibility
- Always feel comfortable asking Veteran what they mean when speaking of things military
- Be open and honest
- Feel free to ask "How was your experience while in the Service" (or mention branch if you know it)

TIPS to Demonstrate Cultural Awareness

- Avoid referring to all service members as “soldiers,” which refers only to those who serve in the Army. Refer to those who serve in the Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard as sailors, airmen, marines, and guardsmen respectively
- *Servicemembers* or *troops* refers to those who serve in the military—Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard personnel in all branches of service
- *Veteran* refers to those who have served in the military
- Not all veterans served in combat
- All veterans are not eligible for the same benefits.
- *Military families* refers to family members of both service members and veterans
- Consider hanging a sign in your program that indicates to Veterans and Service Members that you would like to know if they have served

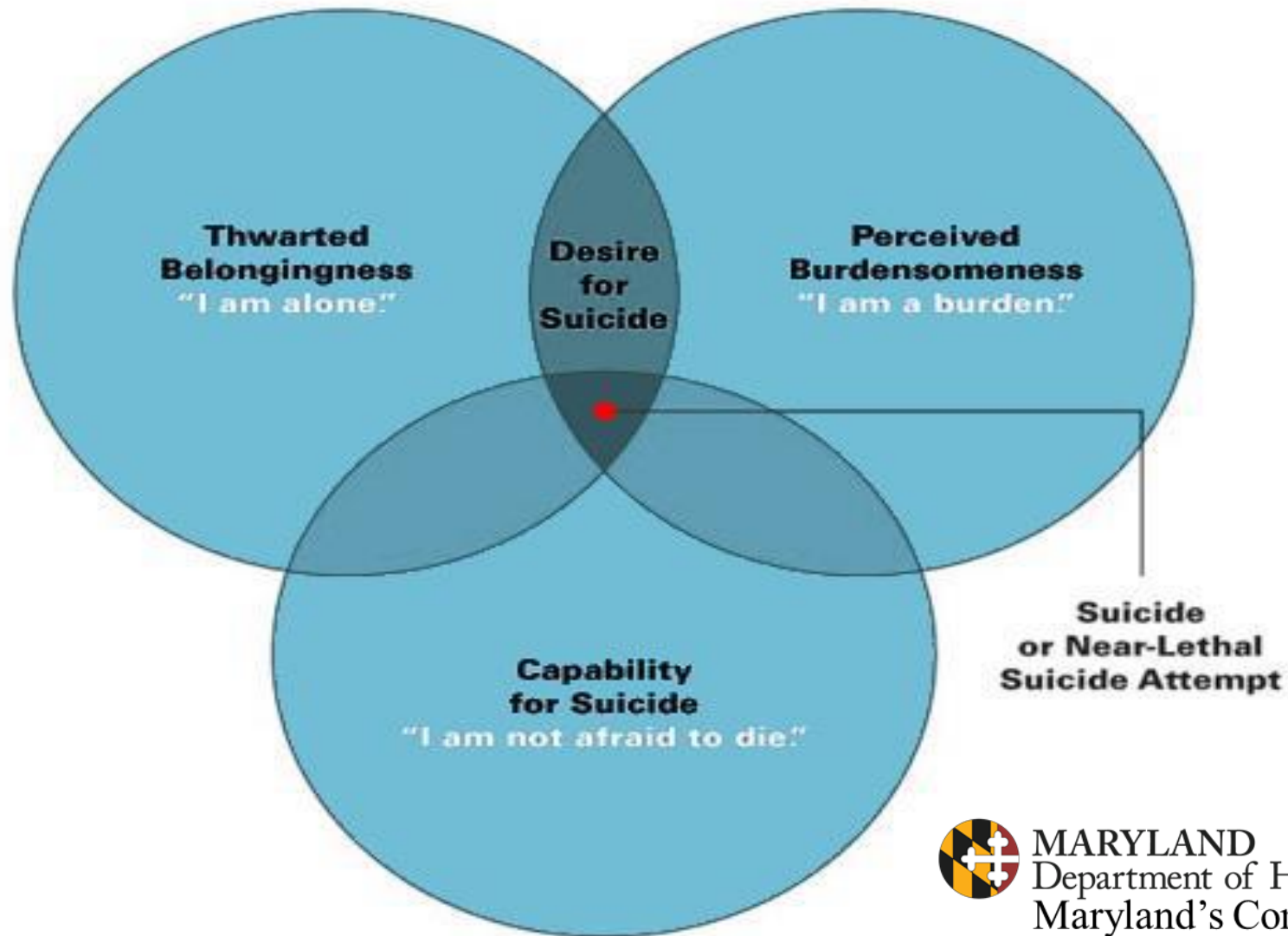


Final Thoughts Military and Veteran Culture

- Most Veterans affiliate themselves positively with their time in service
- Never assume and don't be afraid to ask
- Try not to be intimidated when asking Veteran what they mean when speaking of things military
- Be open and honest

Veterans & Suicide

Joiner's Suicide Theory



Veteran Resources

➤ Department of Veteran Affairs

- Veteran Health Administration (VHA)
 - Provides healthcare to eligible Veterans
- Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA)
 - Oversees benefit distribution to eligible Veterans
 - Disability payments for injuries/illness sustained while in service
 - GI Bill other vocational and educational resources

➤ Vet Centers

- Provide counseling, support, couples and family therapy to eligible Veterans

Veteran Resources Continued

- National Guard Family Assistance Center
 - For members of the national guard and their families
- Veteran Service Organizations

Can help with Veteran benefits, service compensation – typically advocacy

- VFW
- DAV
- American Legion

VA Medical Center

- **Mental health services:**

- Outpatient mental health and substance abuse
- Mental health and substance abuse residential Care
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (similar to PRP)
- Mental Health Intensive Case Management (similar to PACT)

- **Homeless services:**

- Domiciliary (housing vocationally focused residential unit)
- Vocational services
- HUD/VA Support Housing
- Homeless outreach



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Promoting Veteran Crisis Line

- Crisis line...**1-800-273-8255 Press “1”**
- Promote Crisis Line at every opportunity
- Highlight that Veteran needs to press “1”
- Mention that family and friends can also utilize Crisis Line
- Veterans can also text or instant message

State & Community Crisis Resources

2-1-1 Maryland

- One stop shop for community and state resources
- 211 operators have the ability to connect directly with a behavioral health specialist in the case of a behavioral health crisis
- Variety of available resources (i.e. behavioral health, housing, basic needs etc.)

Maryland Statewide Crisis line...1-800-422-0009

- Not a Veteran specific hotline
- Calls can come from any concerned party or individual
- A resource for crisis or suicide

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Questions
